2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

Cooking the morning meal is a long-drawn-out process, requiring from two to three hours, for not only does water take a long time to boil in those earthen pots over a slow fire, but everything is done in a leisurely manner. While the meal is being cooked, the children and the women themselves roast mealies or monkey nuts, or sit about the courtyard eating sugar cane, for it is summer, the time when there is plenty. The old woman is now roasting some shelled monkey nuts on a potsherd; these she will stamp fine and add to the relish to give it additional flavouring.

A comely girl of about fourteen enters with a large gourd of water on her head, which a friend helps her to put down. '*Mukhadi uwe*,' calls out her mother. '*Maiweyo*,' says the girl, a polite reply or formal answering phrase by which you know at once that she belongs to the royal group, for each group has its own distinguishing answering praise-title. 'Get ready the plates. I shall be dishing up soon.' Mukhadi goes into the hut and collects five dishes—three gourds and two wooden plates—in which are the remains of the previous meal. The remains are carefully set aside to be used for making light beer (*mahodo*), for food is never wasted; then the dishes are scoured by means of powdered sandstone and stood in a row in the sun to dry.

In a neighbouring courtyard a grandmother begins feeding a two-months-old baby with thick gruel of sprouted corn. She begins by washing its face, then, cupping her left hand filled with gruel before its mouth, she pushes in the food with a finger of the right hand. Splutterings and gurglings are of no avail till Granny has decided it has had enough. This novel procedure is followed from the day of birth as a supplement to mother's milk. After its meal comes its daily bath. The baby is held over a large potsherd of warm water and washed with a little soap, special care being taken to clean the head and eyes. The baby wriggles and cries; the sherd has jagged edges; the European onlooker fears that at any moment the child may slip out of the woman's hands; but she is skilled and experienced in the handling of infants, and nothing untoward occurs. After being air-dried, the baby's body is anointed with vaseline, an easy substitute for the butter fat of old. In the meantime two boys arrive, one with a large cock under his arm. They are sorry to have taken so long, but, when they looked for a fowl, only the fowls of their neighbours could be seen; their own were nowhere to be found. Your hostess is about to have it killed, but you decide you would prefer to taste native relish, so you give instructions that it is to be left on the hut verandah with legs tied together.

The woman of the mealie has lifted her pot off the fire and is beginning to dish up. Smoothing down the porridge with her wooden spoon, she skilfully scoops out a spoonful, which she carefully lays on one of the platters. The result is a neat cake of porridge over which a smooth, outer skin very rapidly forms. A cake is placed in each of the dishes before a second is added, till there are four or five on each. A Lovedu housewife is very particular about the manner in which she dishes up food, for untidy-looking cakes with jagged edges give one the reputation of slovenliness. The Lovedu pride themselves on their cleanliness with food; porridge must be white, with no suspicion of a foreign object. When a

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

woman has finished dishing up, she very often wipes out the pot with her fingers before setting it aside, for utensils are washed just before they are needed—not after use. To prepare the relish a little water is placed in a wide-mouthed cooking dish, the pumpkin leaves and flowers are added and then put on the fire. Within a few minutes the spinach is sufficiently cooked. A handful of salt is put in, the ground monkey nuts are added, the mixture stirred once or twice, when it is ready to be dished up into small black earthen basins.

Serving food to guests is a ceremonious affair. The sleeping or reception hut is carefully swept out; the food is placed in it, often before the dust has properly settled, a mat is unrolled and the guests are called to eat. To your surprise, you discover that the host does not dine with honoured guests. A wooden dish of food has been placed in a double basket with a lid. Beside it stands the relish. Makhadi approaches on her knees with a white enamel basin of water for the guests to wash their hands, then crawls away again, leaving the water to be used again after the meal. Before beginning to eat, the youngest of the visitors claps his hands saying, '*Ndou.*' The rest reply, '*Mavuna,*' and the meal is begun. Each one, using his fingers, breaks a piece of a maize meal cake, dips it in the dish of relish and eats it. There is no salt in the porridge, to make up for which the relish is very salt indeed. All eat from one bowl but there is nothing unhygienic in this. When finished you again wash your hands. Light beer, if there is any, may round off the meal.

There is no communal meal and no proper mealtime. Each wife places food for the husband in the reception hut of his chief wife and here he comes to eat any time he wishes. Later the remains will be fetched back to the hut whence it came. Food is not sent from one hut to another, except when special luxury dishes are made, known in general as *madonga* and usually prepared outside of cooking hours. These are always shared. The younger children sit down to eat with the mother in the courtyard, but the herdboys, in a hurry to take out the cattle, seize several cakes, place some relish on them, and walk off. Mutiane, aged four, does not want vegetable relish. He has seen meat prepared in the courtyard of his friend Nagumbi and so he refuses spinach. When his mother tries to coax him, he merely sets up a dismal howl; but he is neither severely scolded nor beaten as a European child in such a situation might be. Instead they try to pacify him, till at last the mother of Nagumbi, seeing the fuss, brings him a small piece of meat, telling him to be quiet.

The cooking done, a general migration takes place, and the village, a hive of industry in the morning, becomes almost if not quite deserted. During the agricultural season one seldom finds people at home in the afternoons. They are all out in the fields. One woman, securing the reed door of her kitchen by means of a wooden stamper balanced against it on the outside, takes a hoe and is off to surround her crops beans. Another is still busy with her weeding. A third, taking a calabash of food with her, goes to join her daughter, who left shortly after sunrise, to make merule cider under the trees in their field. It is a process involving considerable labour. Mamadomi is not going to the fields to-day. She wants to smear a fresh coating of dung over her courtyard and to go on with a basket she

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

264
415
291
301

273
415
291
301

XI. DOMESTIC DUTIES

(a) GRINDING OF REQUIRED GREAT MEAL

(b) STRAINING THE PREPARED BEER BREW

[facing p. 144]

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938,1961-1962) 1964
FX14 Lovedu FX14

other wives. When the mother's brother's daughter is one of the younger wives in a polygynous household she may be completely overshadowed by the first wife. The eldest son of the first wife occupies a position of importance in the family. He is said to stand in the shoes (literally 'footprints') of his father and after the latter's death has a right to be *sumu'd*, i.e., given a portion of any animal killed by any of his brothers long after they have dispersed and live in separate homesteads. There are instances, especially in the case of district heads and where the chief house has no male heir, in which the eldest son of the first wife married tries to usurp the position. But though he may appear for a time to be succeeding as seemed to be the case in more than one instance in the 1930's when first we went into the field, I have not come across any cases in which he has succeeded in the long run.

Each wife has her own fields which it is her duty to cultivate for the needs of her 'house'. On her death her sons have first right to inherit her fields unless their father wants to use them himself or arrange for their cultivation to provide food for the younger children; but they may not be used for the benefit of any other 'house'. A daughter may be given her deceased mother's field to cultivate while she is still in her parental home, but she cannot inherit it. A wife is expected to feed herself, her children, her husband and her mother-in-law from her fields. Each time she cooks she sends food to her husband and to his mother. What is left must be returned to her 'house' unless the husband himself gives it to the herd-boys or other children as a group. In the case of special dishes eaten in-between meals, such as cakes of sesamum or ground peanuts, a little will be sent to each of the other women of the homestead with whom the wife is on good terms. In a large homestead this may be confined to the wives of one man. Beer brought to any one 'house' is usually drunk by all in the village and neighbourhood.

In addition to having her own granaries and cooking utensils every wife has a right to raise livestock. She may keep chickens; she may acquire goats by the exchange of her produce; she may get pigs by feeding other people's pigs in return for a pigling. She may even acquire cattle if she is a doctor. In contrast to the Zulu, where the 'house' like that of the Lobedu is